

Patent Application
Docket No. 51582-00001USPT

B2
Cont'd
8 price;

receiving a payment from the customer, the payment being equal to the ticket
associating a unique identifier with the selected ticket option;
storing the unique identifier and the associated ticket option; and
providing a pre-paid airline ticket to the customer, the pre-paid airline ticket
comprising a record of the unique identifier and a record of one or more of the plurality of
geographic flight parameters.

REMARKS

Favorable reconsideration of this application is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-16 and 34-49 remain pending in the present application. Claims 17-33 have been withdrawn, without prejudice, as being drawn to an unelected invention.

Claims 1-11, 14-16, 34-38, 41, and 44-49 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(a) as being anticipated by Walker et al. (U.S. Patent 5,897,620), hereinafter Walker.

Claims 12-13 and 39-40 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Walker et al. in view of Oneda (U.S. Patent 5,953,705), hereinafter Oneda.

Independent claim 34 has been amended. No new matter has been introduced.

Applicant's claimed invention is generally directed to pre-paid airline tickets that **may be used by purchasers to book flights at later dates**. The pre-paid airline tickets may be generic in the sense that parameters often associated with airline tickets may be **unspecified**. The parameters included on the pre-paid airline tickets may include both geographic flight and non-geographic flight parameters, where the geographic flight parameters include a starting and ending location (e.g., airport or region) (see, for example, page 11, lines 2-3). The pre-paid

Patent Application
Docket No. 51582-00001USPT

airline ticket may be issued to the purchaser for later use (i.e., booking of a flight). In booking a flight with the pre-paid airline ticket having an unspecified geographic flight parameter, the purchaser may specify the geographic flight parameter, along with specifying other non-geographic flight parameters, and flights that are available that meet the specifications may be listed for selection. The purchaser may select an available flight and the pre-paid airline ticket may be updated to include the specified geographic flight parameters.

Walker is generally directed to the sale of airline tickets having specified geographic flight parameters that are selected by the airlines (abstract, lines 1-3). Walker teaches a system and method that provides a purchaser with flexibility to allow the airlines to select a time and flight to schedule the purchaser. In purchasing the airline ticket, the purchaser specifies both a departure and destination location (see, for example, col. 3, lines 3-4; col. 3, lines 14-15). Once an airline selects the booking, an airline ticket having specified flight parameters, both geographic and non-geographic, is issued to the purchaser. In other words, the airline ticket is issued with the departure and destination locations specified thereon.

With regard to the rejection of claims 1-11, 14-16, 34-38, 41, and 44-49 under 35 U.S.C. 102, Applicant respectfully traverses the rejection. Claim 1 is directed to a pre-paid airline ticket including "a plurality of geographic flight parameters...at least one...being an unspecified geographic flight parameter". By contrast, Walker requires that the geographic flight parameters are (1) specified by the purchaser in requesting the airline ticket (Abstract, lines 2-3; col. 2, lines 32-33, lines 45-46, lines 56-57; col. 3, lines 3-4, lines 14-15; col. 4, lines 53-54; etc.) and (2) included on the purchased airline ticket (col. 3, lines 9-11). Throughout Walker, in providing for the purchaser to purchase the airline ticket, the geographic flight parameters are specified so that the airlines, who actually select or perform the booking of the ticket (Abstract,

Patent Application
Docket No. 61582-00001USPT

line 2; col. 3, lines 9-11; col. 4, lines 52-53), may determine whether a seat is available that meets the specified geographic flight parameters. Applicant notes that a discussion regarding operations and limitations of Walker was provided in Applicant's originally filed application (background section, page 2, lines 9-13).

Applicant respectfully disagrees with the interpretation of the "unspecified-time ticket" of Walker (col. 3, lines 1-11) as set forth in the Office Action. The definition of "unspecified-time ticket" in Walker requires that the "origin and destination locations together with the travel dates" be specified (col. 4, lines 50-55). While the flight may be determined later by the airline, the geographic flight parameters for both the purchasing request and ticketing issuance are specified by the purchaser **before** issuance of the ticket according to the definition provided by Walker. Therefore, Walker does not teach or suggest an airline ticket having an unspecified geographic parameter. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests that the 35 USC 102 rejection of independent claim 1 be withdrawn. Claims 2-11 and 14-16 depend from independent claim 1 and should be allowable for at least the same reasons.

Amended independent claim 34 is directed to a method for providing pre-paid airline tickets, including storing ticket options in a ticket options in a database. Each ticket option includes a ticket price and flight parameters, "at least one of the...flight parameters being an unspecified geographic flight parameter" (claim 34, lines 3-4). The ticket options are presented to a customer and a ticket selection is received from the customer. A pre-paid airline ticket is provided to the customer, where the pre-paid airline ticket includes "one or more of the...flight parameters". By contrast, as previously discussed, Walker requires that the geographic flight parameters are (1) specified by the purchaser in requesting the airline ticket and (2) included on the purchased airline ticket. Therefore, Walker does not teach or suggest storing ticket options

Patent Application
Docket No. 61582-00001USPT

having an unspecified geographic flight parameter. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests that the rejection of independent claim 34 under 35 USC 102 be withdrawn. Claims 35-38 and 41 depend from independent claim 34 and should be allowable for at least the same reasons.

Independent claim 44 is directed to a computer program for providing pre-paid airline tickets using a pre-paid ticket identifier database. The database includes records having fields including (1) an identifier field that uniquely identifies a pre-paid airline ticket and (2) geographic flight parameter fields, where at least one of the geographic flight parameter fields includes "an unspecified geographic flight parameter". Again, Walker requires that the geographic flight parameters are (1) specified by the purchaser in requesting the airline ticket and (2) included on the purchased airline ticket. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests that the rejection of independent claim 44 under 35 USC 102 be withdrawn. Claims 45-49 depend from independent claim 34 and should be allowable for at least the same reasons.

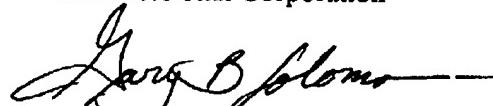
With regard to the rejection under 35 USC 103(a) of claims 12-13 and 39-40, Applicant respectfully traverses the rejection. Claims 12-13 and 39-40 stand rejected under 35 USC 103 as being unpatentable over Walker in view of Oneda. Oneda generally describes a ticketless system and processing method for issuance of an airplane ticket using an integrated circuit (IC) card. In one embodiment, the system is a stand-alone machine that accepts the IC card and utilizes the personal information stored on the IC card to issue the airline ticket having a magnetic stripe. Oneda, however, does not teach or suggest a pre-paid airline ticket having an unspecified geographic flight parameter. Therefore, Oneda does not cure the deficiencies of Walker with regard to independent claims 1, 34, and 44, and, accordingly, the rejection of dependent claims 12-13 and 39-40 under 35 USC 103 should be withdrawn.

Patent Application
Docket No. 61582-00001USPT

In view of the above, it is believed that this application is in condition for allowance, and such a Notice is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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Patent Application
Docket No. 61582-00001USPT

EXHIBIT "A" - CLAIMS MARKED TO SHOW CHANGES

- 1 34. A method for providing pre-paid airline tickets comprising:
- 2 storing a plurality of ticket options in a ticket option database, each ticket option
- 3 comprising a ticket price and a plurality of flight parameters, at least one of the plurality of flight
- 4 parameters being an unspecified geographic flight parameter;
- 5 presenting; the ticket options to a customer;
- 6 receiving a ticket selection from the customer;
- 7 receiving a payment from the customer, the payment being equal to the ticket
- 8 price;
- 9 associating a unique identifier with the selected ticket option;
- 10 storing the unique identifier and the associated ticket option; and
- 11 providing a pre-paid airline ticket to the customer, the pre-paid airline ticket
- 12 comprising a record of the unique identifier and a record of one or more of the plurality of
- 13 geographic flight parameters.